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SUBJECT: Female Official Named New Fujian Party Secretary

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11. (SBU) Summary and comment: Twenty-five years since the last woman was appointed to a provincial party secretary position, the Chinese central government has named Sun Chunlan as the new Party Secretary of Fujian Province. Sun's appointment suggests a further expansion of President Hu Jintao's influence and a greater political focus on cross-strait relations with Taiwan. End summary and comment.

Woman Leader Steps into Limelight  
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12. (SBU) Sun Chunlan, former vice chairwoman and party secretary of the All China Federation of Trade Union (ACFTU), was promoted to Party Secretary of Fujian Province on November 30, 2009. She is the only woman currently holding a provincial party secretary position and only the third woman to be given such a title since 1949. The last such appointment was nearly 25 years ago. An online commentator stated that as a woman, she is proud of Sun's work and hopes that she will lead Fujian to a brighter future.

13. (SBU) Comment: Sun's appointment is part of a larger mid-term shuffling of provincial leaders by the Chinese central government since the 17th Party Congress, indicating the start of strategic maneuverings in preparation for the 18th Party Congress in 2012 when China's fifth generation leaders are expected to take the reins. Reportedly part of the Tuanpai faction with Communist Youth League (CYL) background -- Hu's power base -- Sun's appointment signals further consolidation of Hu's power and his influence over China's current and future leadership. Currently 59 years-old, Sun may continue to serve as Fujian's Party Secretary after the next Party Congress before hitting the retirement age of 65. If Politburo Member and State Councilor Liu Yandong -- China's most senior female official -- retires in 2012 and the leadership desires to replace Liu with another woman, there might be an opportunity for Sun to be elevated to the Politburo, where officials are permitted to serve until age 67. End comment.

14. (SBU) In spite of Sun's apparent Tuanpai links, she is also said to have developed amicable working relations with the "princelings," leaders who owe their power largely to family connections. Specifically, Sun and Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai served together for many years in Liaoning and reportedly worked well

together. Internet commentators speculated that her appointment as Fujian Party Secretary owed partially to her ability to balance the two factions.

#### Western Strait Economic Development Plan a Priority

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¶5. (SBU) Sun likely will focus on Fujian's top development priority -- implementation of the "Western Strait Economic Development Plan" and relations with Taiwan. However, some have expressed concerns about her relative lack of economic experience. Some online political commentators stated that the Western Strait Economic Development Plan will only become a slogan under Sun's leadership and that they don't expect Fujian to achieve any economic goals in the near future. Other online commentators suggested that her political background is only useful in eliminating any instability in the province.

#### Labor Paves the Way for Sun

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¶6. (SBU) Having served both in the All China Women's Federation and the ACFTU, Sun comes to Fujian with a strong labor background. (Comment: Ties with the ACFTU are not rare for Fujian's leaders; former Fujian Party Secretary Lu Zhan Gong worked for the ACFTU before coming to Fujian, and Sun's former ACFTU boss, Wang Zhaoguo, was Fujian Party Secretary before heading the ACFTU. End comment.) As vice chairwoman of the Liaoning ACFTU from 1991 to 1993, a challenging period for China's state-owned enterprise reforms, Sun's work ultimately elevated her to chairwoman of the organization in ¶1995. Sun was also rumored in the Chinese press to be responsible for the drafting of China's Labor Contract Law, which became effective in January 2008.

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#### Biographic Data

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¶7. (U) Sun Chunlan, born in 1950, is a native of Raoyang, Hebei Province. She joined the Communist Party of China (CPC) in May 1973 and was educated at the CPC Central Party School. In her first job at a watch factory in Anshan City, Liaoning Province during the height of the Cultural Revolution, Sun quickly moved into a CYL leadership position after just five years. At 24, she was promoted to be party secretary of the CYL at the Anshan Light Industry Bureau. Beginning in 1988, she served as director of Anshan's Women's Federation. From 1991 to 1993, Sun was vice chairwoman of the Liaoning ACFTU and became chairwoman two years later.

¶8. (U) In 1995, Sun began her political ascent, adding member of the Standing Committee of the Liaoning CPC committee to her many roles. Within ten years, she moved through the ranks as President of the Liaoning Provincial CPC Party School, Party Secretary of Dalian, and Deputy Secretary of the Liaoning CPC Committee. In this last position, she was deputy to then Liaoning Party Secretary and current Vice Premier Li Keqiang. From the 2005 to 2009, Sun served as Vice President and Party Secretary of the national-level ACFTU.

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